



## **Labor and Public Employees Committee**

### **HB 5356 An Act Concerning Pandemic Pay for Essential Workers**

Good afternoon, Chairwoman Kushner, Chairwoman Porter, ranking members, and members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee. My name is Daisy Sanchez and I work as a Vocational Rehab Counselor at CVH and Blue Hills. I am also a member of AFSCME Council 4, Local 2663. Members of 2663, like myself, have continued providing services throughout the pandemic.

I am testifying today in support of HB 5356, An Act Concerning Pandemic Pay for Essential Workers. This important legislation would provide a payment of \$2000 for full time and \$1000 to part time workers who were deemed essential when Covid-19 started. This payment would be a show of support from the State of Connecticut for the work we did and the services we continued to provide during the pandemic.

When Covid-19 began, it became all hands on deck for workers. As a Vocational Rehab Counselor I am typically non-essential but when the pandemic started I was suddenly an essential employee. I knew the work needed to continue but that didn't diminish the extra fear and stress that I had now at work. Even though I was able to wear a mask and a face shield I still had direct contact with patients. This increased my risk of contracting Covid or spreading it to loved ones.

Workers who were on the frontlines of the pandemic provided services and kept our state running throughout very difficult times. We were called heroes and praised by elected officials for the work we were doing. Now is the time to compensate essential workers with a \$2000 or \$1000 payment for being essential during the last couple years.

I strongly urge the committee to pass this proposal and show support for the essential workers that continued working at risk to themselves and their families.